

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending in the application. Claims 1-7, and 15-17 are withdrawn from consideration as drawn to non-elected inventions. Claims 8-14 and 18-23 stand rejected in the Office Action.

Applicants amend claims 8 and 18 with this reply and cancel the withdrawn claims 1-7 and 15-17. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 8-14 and 18-23 remain pending.

Support for the amendments is found in the specification as filed, for example, on page 16 in the last sentence of paragraph 59. Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Applicants have submitted a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement disclosing several related applications. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner initial the enclosed Form 1449 form and return it with the next Office Action.

DRAWINGS

The drawings are objected to because Part 10 of Figure 1 is not mentioned in the description. In the reply, Applicants have amended Figure 1 to remove the designation of Part 10. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are attached. In light of the amendment, Applicants respectfully request the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheet," which includes Figure 1, replaces the original sheet including Figure 1.

An annotated Sheet Showing Changes to Figure 1 is also included.

RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

In response to the Restriction Requirement, Applicants have cancelled claims 1-7 and 15-17. Applicants reserve the right to file further divisionals and continuing applications to pursue the inventions recited in those claims.

OBJECTION TO THE ABSTRACT

The Abstract is objected to because it contains more than 150 words. Applicants submit an amended Abstract herewith. Applicants respectfully request the objection be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 8-14 and 18-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Sekisui reference (JP 2001-150559) in view of the McBain reference (U.S. Pat. No. 5,777,053). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection to the amended claims and request reconsideration.

For a rejection of claims under § 103(a) to be sustained over a combination of references, the references when combined must disclose or suggest every limitation of the claims. If any element of the amended claims is missing from the combined references, rejection under § 103(a) is improper and should be withdrawn.

The combined references fail to disclose or suggest the limitation added by amendment, that being that the barrier coat contains a filler comprising fibers with a length of 1 mm or less. The Sekisui reference discloses a composite article containing in order a gel coat 1, a first interlayer 21, a second interlayer 22, and a reinforcement fiber layer 3. In the reference, the interlayers 21 and 22 are disposed between the gel

coat and a reinforcement fiber layer. The first interlayer 21 contains no fibers, but contains 80 phr of calcium carbonate. The second interlayer contains no calcium carbonate, but contains glass fibers having a length of 12 mm. The claims, on the other hand, recite that the barrier layer contains fibers (such as glass fibers) having a length of 1 mm or less. Because such a limitation is not present in the combined references, the amended claims are patentable over those references.

Furthermore, it would not have been obvious to modify the disclosure of the combined references to arrive at the subject matter of the amended claims. To modify one of the interlayers of the reference so that it would contain glass fibers of 1 mm or less instead of glass fibers of 12 mm or less would defeat the purpose of the interlayer and the composite described in the reference. The second interlayer 22 in the reference is provided so as to give the composite article sufficient strength for its application. Thus in paragraph 10 and 12 of the reference, the fiber in "the second middle class" is referred to as "reinforcement fiber" having length of at least 3 to 20 mm. On the basis of that disclosure, a person of skilled in the art would not have been motivated to modify the reference's teaching to use fibers having a length of 1 mm or less. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit the subject matter of the amended claims would not have been obvious in light of the cited references.

Given the deficiencies of the primary Sekisui reference with respect to the amended claims as discussed above, the McBain reference does not make the invention as recited in the amended claims obvious. The McBain reference is cited merely for the proposition of polyurethane gel coats. Applicants respectfully submit that even if the gel coat of the McBain reference were to be combined with the composite article of the Sekisui reference, the resulting structure would not contain every limitation

of the amended claims. On that basis and for the reasons discussed above, Applicants believe the amended claims are patentable in view of the cited references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of the claims be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, Applicants believe the claims are in a state of allowability and respectfully request an early notice of allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number below, if that would be helpful in resolving any issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 22, 2005

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JUL 22 2005
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